THE SPIRIT of POPERY TRYED, Whether it be of GOD.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING at WHITEHALL, upon the Fifth of *November*, 1699.

By the Right Reverend Father in God *WILLIAM*, Lord Bishop of *OXON.* Talbot

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ERRATA.

PAge 7. *del.* the firſt Line, and to the word *Faith* in the 2d Line. p. 8. l. 17. for *Burnings*, r. *Fumings*. l. 26. for *Zeal*, r. *real*. p. 14. l. 28. after *enjoy'd*, add *who ſuffered*. p. 17. l. 3. r. *Campanella's*.

THE Spirit of Popery tryed, Whether it be of GOD.

1 John iv. 1.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God.

THat by this Caution, *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God*, is meant, give not up your Faith to the Doctrine, nor your selves to the Conduct of every Teacher and Guide, that shall pretend to instruct and govern you, till you have examined and proved, whether his Commission and Doctrine be of God, is evident from the Reason wherewith the Apostle inforces this Advice, in the latter part of the Verse, *viz. because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* And truly if this Reason could justify the pertinency and usefulness of our Apostle's Exhortation at that time, the pressing of the same Advice will appear, upon the same Grounds, to be no less seasonable and necessary in this Age, wherein the great Author of Lies and Divisions has shewed himself

ſuch a Maſter in his Art, ſo ſucceſsfully imploy'd all his Stratagems and Inſtruments to corrupt the Faith, and break the Unity of the Church; that not only ancient Hereſies are revived and improved, but new ones broach'd, and the ſeamleſs Coat of Chriſt torn into ſo many Shreds, his myſtical Body broken into ſo many Sects and Parties, that it is almoſt as eaſy to reconcile, as to number them: And each of the different Parties (all of which cannot be in the right) would engroſs Truth to themſelves, confine it to their own Diviſion, and exclude thoſe that differ from them from any title to it.

It might be of good uſe to bring theſe ſeveral Pretenders to the Teſt laid down in the Text, to *try the Spirits whether they be of God:* But to examine them all, would be the Work not of a piece of an Hour, but of a whole Year. The Time uſually allotted for ſuch Exerciſes as this, will not allow me to try more than one of them; and the Day points out which I ſhould pitch on. That bold Monopolizer of Chriſtianity, which unchriſtians all the World beſides her own Communion; anathematizes, excludes from Heaven, and damns to Hell, all that will not renounce their Reaſon and Senſes, and blindly ſubmit to her Uſurpation; who ſticks at no Methods for the extending of her Tyranny, whether of Fraud and Treachery, or Violence and Cruelty: Witneſs that fatal Deſign, (fatal in the Event to the Authors of it, but intended ſo to this Church and Nation,) which was as on this Day to have been put in execution, the never to be forgotten Powder-Plot! A Plot, which, ſay ſome of the Soberer of their own Authors, Poſterity will not believe for the Horrour of it. Horrour indeed! if there muſt have been ſo many Thouſand of Men, Women and Children, as one of them ſays it was computed, cut off at one Blow, had it taken effect. A Plot ſurely hatch'd in Hell, that Lake of Sulphur,

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and form'd in the dark Parts of the Earth, and discover'd by him only to whom *the darkness is no darkness*, and whose *hand can find out those that dig down into Hell*. And so much (though *Faux* when he was taken, cry'd out, that the Devil, and not God, was the Discoverer) is own'd by some of their own Party, who have acknowledged the Discovery to have been from God.

To express our grateful Sentiments of which miraculous Deliverance, as also of another from the Designs of the same Enemies which we have more lately received on the same day, and to pay our Just Tribute of Thanks and Praise to the Great God for them, is the end of our present Meeting, to which, I hope, I shall do Justice, and that my Discourse shall not labour of Impertinence, or Unsuitableness to the Text or Day, if instead of relating the Story, (of which, after so many Annual Returns of this Day, no one can be supposed to be ignorant or forgetful) or proving the Truth of the Facts, which is as unnecessary, *habemus confitentes reos*, I rather chuse to bring that Religion, which by these, and other such ever to be abhor'd Methods, they restlessly labour to propagate, to the Trial, advised to in the Words I have read.

And if, upon Examination, it appears to be not of God; as,

I. Imposing Doctrines and Practices, that derogate from, and undermine the Great and Fundamental Article of the Christian Religion.

II. As being in a great measure contrary to the Nature and Design of the Christian Religion.

III. As having bid very fair for the weakening those Grounds and Motives of Credibility, whereby the Divinity of the Christian Religion was asserted, and it recommended to the World. And,

IV. As

IV. As supporting and spreading it self by Methods directly opposite to those by which the Christian Religion was propagated, and even to the Dictates of Morality and Nature.

I suppose I may, with good reason, endeavour in my Application to excite in you,

1. A due Aversion to, and just Abhorrence of, that Religion.

2. Gratitude to God, who has so often discovered and defeated the Designs of our Adversaries, and rendred their Attempts for the introducing and establishing that Religion among us hitherto insuccessful. And,

3. A willingness and readiness to comply with those means which may most effectually secure us against them for the future.

I have here to try the Religion taught and professed in the Church of *Rome*, whether it be of God; and it will appear not to be so, for these Reasons.

1. Because it imposes Doctrines and Practices, that derogate from, and undermine the great Fundamental Article of the Christian Religion; which is this, *that Jesus is the Christ*. This our Apostle does in several Places of his Writings make the distinguishing mark to try the Spirits by, by confessing of which they would appear to be of God, and by denying it of Antichrist. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*, cap. 5. v. 1. But cap. 2. v. 22. *Who is a Liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist denying the Father and the Son.* And in the Verses immediately following my Text; *Hereby know we the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesses Jesus that is come in the Flesh to be the Christ, is of God. And every Spirit*

that confesses not Jesus that is come in the Flesh, to be the Christ, is not of God, but is that Spirit of Antichrist.

So I construe that Proposition, πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, making the Predicate to refer to his Offices as the *Messias*, and not to his Incarnation, which is supposed in the Subject. And this Interpretation is not only agreeable to the Original, but to many parallel Places, where St. *John* expresly makes the Predicate *the Christ*, and to the general Sense of Commentators upon this Place.

Now it's known that *Christ* signifies Anointed, and that Jesus is so called with relation to his Offices.

The Ceremony of Anointing with material Oil has been anciently very usual in the designation of Persons to the Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. And our Lord Jesus being to take upon him those three great Offices: (For *Moses* foretold of him, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up*, Deut. 18. 16. And the Psalmist, *Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek*, Psal. 110. 4. *I have set my King upon my Holy Hill of Sion*, Psal. 2. 6. He being to execute those Offices, was *Anointed* thereto *with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*; and, for that reason, is called *The Christ*: Or, The Anointed.

By virtue of his first, his Prophetical Office, he was to reveal to us, and instruct us in the whole Will of his Father: so *Moses* predicted of him, in the forecited Place, *he shall be like unto me, and him shall ye hear in all things.* And we read in *Heb.* 3. 2. *that he was faithful as Moses was, faithful in all his House.* And he himself tells his Father, *Joh.* 17. that *he had finished the Work he gave him to do, had manifested his Name to Men*, 4, and 6, and in the 8th Verse; *the Words which thou gavest me, I have given them, and they have received them.*

By virtue of his second, his Priestly Office, he was to offer Sacrifice, and intercede for us: The former of which he

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did upon the Croſs, when as the Apoſtle in *Heb.* 9. 14. ſays, *he offered himſelf through the Eternal Spirit without ſpot to God*. And that Offering he tells us was to be but once made, in ſeveral places of that and the following Chapter, and gives Reaſons for it; Firſt, becauſe it could not be oftner made; for *then he muſt often have ſuffered, Chap.* 9. 26. And, ſecondly, becauſe it was needleſs to be repeated; for he had by *that one Offering perfected for ever them that were ſanctified, Chap.* 10. 14.

As to the other part of his Prieſtly Office, that of interceeding for us, the ſame holy Pen-man tells us, *Chap.* 7. 25. *that he ever lives to make Interceſſion for us.* And *Rom.* 8. 24. *Chriſt is at the right hand of God, and maketh Interceſſion for us*; and *there is but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5.

By virtue of his third, his Kingly Office, he was to rule and govern his Church as Head thereof, to preſcribe and give Laws to her. So St. *Paul*, *Eph.* 5. 23, 24. *Chriſt is the Head of the Church, and the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt.* And *Col.* 1. 18. *He is the head of the Body the Church, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* And St. *James* tells us, in his fourth Chapter, *that he is that one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.*

We have now ſeen why *Jeſus* is called the Chriſt, or the Anointed, and what he does in virtue of thoſe Offices he was anointed to. Let us than examine how the Doctrines and Practices, impoſed by the Church of *Rome*, comport with this Account which the Scriptures give of Chriſt and his Offices.

And here it is obvious, at the firſt View, that his firſt, his Prophetical Office, by which he was to reveal to us the whole Will of God is ſtruck at by thoſe Doctrines of theirs, which aſſert that the Holy Scriptures in which he has diſcovered that Will, are not a perfect Rule of Faith; that

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the Holy Scriptures in which he has discovered that Will, the not perfect Rule of Faith; that the sense of them is not clear and perspicuous, but dark and uncertain; that they are like a Nose of Wax, or leaden Rule, liable to be turn'd and bent any way, and therefore are to be pieced out with the addition of Traditions, and not to be read or received without the Expositions of the Church; for what kind of a Prophet or Teacher is that, who hath neither reveal'd to us all that it was necessary for us to know, nor clearly explain'd what he has reveal'd?

And as to his second, his Priestly Office, by which he was to sacrifice and intercede for us, how is that affronted by their frequent Sacrifices of the Mass, which they assert to be true, proper, propitiatory Sacrifices for the sins and wants of the Dead, and of the Living; and by those multitudes of Intercessors, the Virgin *Mary*, and other Saints, whom they join with, or, as one would be tempted by their Practice to judge, prefer before him? Which must necessarily argue that he has neither fully satisfied, nor does effectually intercede for us; for if he had compleatly satisfied, or did sufficiently intercede, what need of other Sacrifices, or other Intercessors, to be added to him? but if he has not fully satisfied, nor does effectually intercede, what sort of a Priest or Mediator will they make of him?

Touching his third, his Kingly Office, by which he was to rule his Church, as Head thereof, and to give Laws to her: We know who he is that assumes to himself the Title of Head of his Church, and who they are that have pretended to a Power of dispensing with his Laws, their own Council of *Constance* will inform us; which tho' it freely confesses that our Saviour and King instituted the Sacrament in both kinds, has yet, with a *non obstante* to the Institution, declared it should be given to the Laity but in one. And then since they have in all these Instances given too plain proof

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that they believe our Lord Jesus has not sufficiently discharged those Offices which belong to the Christ, they must not blame me, but St. *John*, if I conclude that their Spirits, their Religion, is not of God; for it is his Assertion, *that every Spirit that confesses not that Jesus is the Christ, is not of God.*

2. The Religion taught and profes'd in the Church of *Rome* is in a great measure contrary to the Nature and Design of the Christian Religion. As for the Nature of the Christian Religion, it was manly, spiritual, plain, not made up of those *Rudiments* and *beggarly Elements*, by which as by a School-Master the Jew, being but a Child, was to be tutor'd and led to Christ; not clothed with that multitude of outward Observances, nor adorn'd with that gaudy Pageantry and Shew, with which the Mosaical Dispensation was. But now let any one look into the Church of *Rome*, view the multiplicity of Ceremonies and Shadows, the variety of Dresses, their frequent Crosses, Burnings, Sprinklings, *&c.* in a word, how their Religion is almost wholly made of Shew and Pageantry; and let him tell me whether the outward Circumstances have not eaten up the inward Substance, and whether the Complaint may not justly be apply'd to them, that the Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies was more tolerable than theirs?

And then for the Design of the Christian Religion, which was to advance Vertue and Piety, to make Men truly good, and to lead them to Happiness by the Paths of Zeal and sincere Holiness; how well the tendency of that Religion answers those ends, we need look no farther to be informed, than into their Doctrines of Penance, Indulgences, Purgatory, *&c.* which must necessarily encourage Men to be wicked? For why should a Man fear to indulge himself in all manner of sinful Enjoyments, when he has no more to do to obtain an Absolution, than to confess himself to a Priest, and be sorry that he has expos'd himself to Sufferings? At worst, it is but giving

giving some of his Money for his Transgression, and some of the Product of his Estate for the Sin of his Soul; and why should a Man doubt to defer his Repentance and Amendment in present, as long as he has hopes of an after-Game in Purgatory? And then let any judge whether a Religion that abounds with such ungodly Doctrines, can be of God, can lay any claim to that Character which St. *Paul* gives the Christian Religion in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, where he calls it a *Mystery of Godliness*, and whether it has not a juster Title to that other which he gives the corrupt Doctrines of *Antichrist*, in his second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, where he terms them *a Mystery of Iniquity*.

3. The Church of *Rome* has bid very fair for the weakning those grounds or motives of Credibility, by which the Christian Religion was attested and recommended to the World. The chief of those grounds or motives of Credibility, were the Miracles which Christ and his Apostles wrought; by these he was as St. *Peter* speaks, *Acts* 2. ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀποδεδειγμένος, pointed out, declared by God to be the Christ, they were the Credentials he brought from Heaven. This is plain from his own frequent urging of them to beget Faith in his Hearers, *Believe me for the Works sake*; and *I have greater Testimony than that of John, the Works I do, bear witness of me*; from the Effects they had upon many that became his Converts, who *seeing the Works that Jesus did, believed on him*; and from the Testimony of his very Enemies, who when they saw how his Miracles wrought upon the People, cried, if *we let him alone*, do not something to hinder or discredit these Works of his, *all Men will believe on him*; and therefore they endeavour'd to possess the People, that he did them by the *assistance of Beelzebub the Prince of Devils*. So that it is clear the Miracles which Christ wrought, were a main Method which he used to assert the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine, and gain Proselytes to his Religion.

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And this is no less clear, that nothing can tend more to blast the Reputation, or weaken the Authority of those Miracles, than a Society of Christians receiving with those multitudes of other Miracles, which are false, or at best, suspected.

Now to make good the Fact in this Charge against the Church of *Rome*, I appeal not only to those little *pia Fraudes*, which if we will believe Eye-witnesses, are to this time made use of to amuse the Ignorant, and impose upon the Credulous; but to those strange Miracles which have been seriously urged to establish or justifie some of their Doctrines and Worship, as Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, Worship of Images, and Relicts, *&c.* and solemnly own'd in their Publick Service; few of which are so attested as to gain Credit from any unbiass'd and thinking Man, and of some they themselves have been ashamed: 'Tis easie to see what Advantage the *Romanist* has hereby given the *Deist*, what an Argument *ad hominem* he has furnished him with. Indeed a *Protestant* may fairly and truly reply to it, that there is no just arguing from the Falshood of these *Romish* Miracles against the Truth of the Christian, as I could easily shew had I time, and were it my present business; but here is too plain and plausible a *Pretence* given to the Enemies of our Holy Religion, to be overlook'd or neglected by them: And however we may in Charity believe that Church did not design, it may be foresee the Consequences of such a Conduct; yet since she has eventually contributed to the weakning of the Force of the Christian Miracles, and that by pretending false ones of her own, she has come too near to another Character of Antichrist, whose coming was foretold to be after the *working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders.*

4. Lastly, The Religion of the Church of *Rome* is supported and spread by the methods quite opposite to those by which the Christian Religion was propagated, and the dictates

ſtates of Morality and Nature. The Methods by which the Chriſtian Religion was propagated were, like the Author of it, meek and gentle, charitable and loving: The firſt Planters of it water'd it with no other Blood but their own: The Goſpel had no conſuming Heats, but kindly cheriſhing Warmths; the Preachers of it did not make Converts with Sword and Piſtol, but by concluſive Arguments, and moving Perſwaſions; they did not enlighten Mens Underſtandings with Fire and Fagot, but with bright and evident Reaſon. Our Lord ſeverely rebuked thoſe Diſciples, who, out of zeal to their Maſter, whom the *Samaritans* would not receive, would after the Example of *Elijah* have *called for Fire from Heaven upon them*, with *ye know not what Spirit ye are of*; not of mine, not of the Goſpel Temper. What Spirits then are they of, that fetch Fire not from Heaven but Hell, to deſtroy not *Samaritans* but Chriſtians, and that not for refuſing to receive Chriſt, but his aſpiring Adverſary, that is rivalling and juſtling him out of his Throne; who, being of a much more furious Spirit than *Elijah*, would have ſent the King, Lords, and whole repreſentative Body of this Nation, as he went in a fiery Chariot, but not to Heaven, but as they muſt believe of them being Hereticks, to Hell; who, for the propagation of their Religion, can put a Corban upon the moſt ſacred Duties Men owe to their ſeveral Relations, diſturb Societies, unhinge Governments, ruin Families and Kingdoms, form hellish Plots, ſet up mercileſs Inquiſitions, encourage bloody Maſſacres, make Converts by Plunders, Rapes, Priſons, Galleys, Gibbets, and unheard of Torments, to which Death would be preferable. Bleſſed Jeſu! thou meek, gentle Lamb of God! thou that *didſt never ſtrive nor cry*, but wert all Love and Compaſſion even to thy very Enemies, doſt thou own theſe Proceedings, or theſe wretched Murtherers of thy Saints and Servants, who have ſo dipped

thy Coat in the Blood, not of wild Beasts, but thy dear Martyrs, that it can scarcely be known to be *Joseph*'s Coat? No, surely, they have a nearer Relation to the Woman described in the 17th. of *Revel.* who was *arrayed in Purple and Scarlet colour*, whose Garments were tinged with the Gore, and who was *drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.*

But it is time to divert from this ungrateful, though necessary Task, to take my leave of these Persons, and apply my self to you. From the Particulars which I have very briefly toucht upon, time not permitting me to enlarge, it does but too plainly appear, that the Religion of the Church of *Rome* cannot bear the Tryal of the Text, that it is not of God.

By way of Inference then.

1. What a just Aversion should this give us to it, and at what a Distance should it keep us from it? Can we, without Resentment, behold that Church, with bold and daring Doctrines, affronting our Blessed *Messias*, and reflecting upon him, as not having made good that Character, by sufficiently discharging the Offices belonging to it, as we observed in the first particular?

Can we, without Resentment, behold her changing the Substance of the Religion he taught into Shadows, and contradicting the Designs of it, exposingt he holy Author of it, as if he were a Saviour, to save Men in and not from their Sins, by giving Men too great encouragement to indulge themselves in all loose Conversation, as we observed in the second particular?

Can we, without Resentment, behold her shaking the Grounds upon which he asserted the Divinity of it, and furnishing the Enemies of it with Arguments against it, as we observed in the third particular?

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Can we, without Reſentment, behold her Perſecuting, Baniſhing, Tormenting, Killing our Brethren, as in the fourth particular?

How long, Lord, holy and true, doſt not thou avenge the Blood of thy Saints?

But let not our Reſentments carry us to take any Revenge our ſelves, to any of thoſe Practices which we ſo juſtly condemn in them: God forbid that any of their Provocations, even their late baſe and notorious Miſrepreſentations of their Treatment in Proteſtant Countries, ſhould ever prevail with us to change our Chriſtian Conduct towards them; or that any of them ſhould ſuffer in Perſon or Eſtate meerly upon the account of their Religion.

No; may we rather be in the State of our Suffering Brethren, than in the Condition of their Perſecutors; we are aſſured, that *Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, but read of no bleſſing for thoſe that perſecute.

Let us *overcome their evil with good*, and as we have opportunity return to thoſe of that Religion all kind and Chriſtian Offices, for their Perſecutions and deſpiteful Uſage of thoſe of ours; and for their Anathema's and Curſes, Bleſſings and Prayers to our merciful God, That he would *bring into the way of truth all ſuch as have erred and are deceived*; That to thoſe of them that ſee not the Errors and Dangers they are in, he would vouchſafe Light to diſcover them to them; and to thoſe that are ſenſible of them, the Honeſty and Courage to acknowledge their Conviction, and come out of that Communion.

Yet ſure it is no breach of Charity to be upon the defenſive, to guard our ſelves againſt their Attempts; for the Civil Power to check the Boldneſs of their numerous Prieſts in this Town, and reſtrain them from that Liberty they take to invade in many Inſtances our Miniſters Office; and on all Occaſions to attempt the perverting of their People, or

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for us, who minister in holy Things, to arm our Hearers against their Seduction.

And no other Weapon do we desire, or need we to put into their hands, than *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, which, if rightly applied, will make them proof against all their Assaults; for since by that Word it appears, that their Religion is not of God, what Methods of allurement or terror can be of force to draw or drive those to it, who make that Word their Rule?

What Allurement can be presented, that that Question of our Saviour, *Matt.* xvi. 26. will not answer, *What shall a Man be profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

What Terrors and Affrightments can be offer'd that his Promise in the 19th. of this Gospel, ver. 29. will not support a Man under; *Every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and inherit everlasting life?*

I shall conclude this Head with the Words of a *Romish* Writer in the late Reign; which, though used by him in ridicule, shall be applied by me in very good earnest; *That the Martyrs recorded by* Fox, *that past the fiery Tryal in Q.* Mary's *Days*, and I will add all others that shall suffer the like upon the same Account, *had*, and shall have, *a glorious Cause on't; and I doubt not*, as he continues, *but the Crowns of Glory which are such in Heaven, are not inferior to those which they enjoy'd under* Decius *and* Diocletian.

2. What Obligations of gratitude do we lye under to our most gracious God, for not only raising up our holy Reformers, who cast off that insupportable *Yoke, which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear*, rescued this Church from the tyranny of the Bishop of *Rome*, and purged it from the Idolatry and Superstition of that Church; but has also

preserved

preſerved it hitherto from being again corrupted and brought into Bondage, has defended the *Houſe ſwept and garniſhed*, notwithſtanding all his Atempts, from the *return of the evil Spirit*.

Whoever reflects upon the Strength and Riches of the Church of *Rome*, the Number of her Members, her Intereſt with, or rather Authority over too many of the Princes of Chriſtendom, whom ſhe has made drunk with the Wine of her Fornication, and bewitcht with her Philters, to lay their Heads in her Lap, and give up their Power to her.

How her Principles will give her leave to do any Evil, that ſo great a Good may come of it, as extending her Tyranny, and bringing heretical Nations into ſubjection to her.

How ſhe truly looks upon this Church to be the greateſt Obſtacle in her way, that hinders her extirpating the *Northern Hereſy*.

How often, being thus provided with Power and Principle, and ſtrong Inclination to deſtroy this Church, ſhe has attempted it every Reign ſince the Reformation.

Whoever reflects upon all this, and adds, that we have not always been ſo ſtrictly upon our Guard againſt her as we ought to have been; but have always had a treacherous Party within us, ready to betray us to her, muſt acknowit to be *Of the Lord's mercy that we have not been long ſince conſumed by them*; and that, *If the Lord himſelf had not been on our ſide, when Men conſpired and roſe up againſt us, they had ſwallowed us up quick when they were ſo wrathfully diſpleaſed at us*. And how ought we then to add, *Praiſed be the Lord, who has not given us over as a Prey unto their Teeth.*

How ſhould we ſay of this Day in particular, That *this is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it*: How memorable ought is to be to us, as I hope it will be to our lateſt Poſterity, on which God has twice

appeared ſo wonderfully for us; once in the timely and ſtrange Diſcovery of the Powder Plot in King *James* the Firſt's Time; and again, in that great Deliverance from the no leſs dangerous Deſigns of the ſame Enemies in the Reign of King *James* the Second, which I muſt date from this Day, on which the happy Inſtrument of it Landed in this Kingdom; of which Deliverance I would not deſire to raiſe any one's grateful Senſe higher, than in proportion to thoſe Apprehenſions of our danger; which however ſome are willing to forget now, every thinking Man had then.

Adored be the Majeſty of Heaven, who has ſo often commanded Deliverance for us, blaſted the Deſigns and Attempts of our Enemies, that had *evil will to our Sion*, and not yet ſuffered them *to devour Jacob, or lay waſte his dwelling place.*

3. How ready and willing ſhould we be to comply with, and purſue theſe Methods, which will effectually ſecure us againſt their Attempts for the future? There is a remarkable Prophecy in the Mſſ. of a great Antiquary of our own, That *Popery ſhould decay about the Year* 1500, *and be reſtored about* 1700, *and that moſt likely by means of our Diviſions, which threaten the Reformation*, &c.

What credit ſoever this Prediction may deſerve, as to the Thing it foretells, the Reſtitution of Popery, and the Time it prefixes for it, yet the Methods by which it ſays it will moſt likely be brought about, are ſo reaſonable and probable, That, I think, without pretending to the Spirit of Prophecy, a Man may venture to ſay, that if ever Popery (humanly ſpeaking) comes in upon us, it muſt be at thoſe Breaches which we our ſelves make.

'Tis known who they are that firſt cauſed, and are ſtill fomenting our unhappy Diviſions; and ſure we have been

long

long enough Tools in their Hands, for the working their Ends, and our own Ruin.

Whoever looks into *Campanella*'s Treatise of the *Spanish* Monarchy, the Scheme he has there drawn, for the subjecting of this Nation and Church to the Power of *Spain*, and Tyranny of *Rome*, will find that the Method he proposes are the embroiling of *Scotland*, the dividing of *England*, and the Instigating the Bishops and Calvinists, as he calls them, against one another; and whoever compares this Project with the Practices of *Rome*, in relation to us, which our Chronicles or Memories may inform us of, will be satisfied that the latter have been an exact Comment upon the former.

But this Maxim, *Divide & Impera*, they might have learned from the old *Romans*; would to God we could learn from them one Principle too, which Nature taught them, and Revelation has more forcibly recommended to us, that of a publick Spirit, and a hearty Concern for the publick Welfare, which would beat down and triumph over all little private Interests, and private Piques, and dispose and engage us to that Peace and Union, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, which would be under God our securest Guard against all the Designs and Attacks of our Enemies.

As to the former; would we lay aside our Passions for a while, and suffer our cooler Reason to advise, it would tell us, That *a Kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation*, that every particular must suffer in the publick Destruction.

That in our Case 'tis evident to a Demonstration, That if ever our Enemies prevail over us, there is no quarter to be expected by any; that even those who shall have served them most faithfully, by being unfaithful to their Country, cannot look for better Treatment than what they will have highly deserved.

That

That it is the height of Phrenſy and Madneſs, for the gratifying an angry, or ſerving a covetous Paſſion; for the reaking our Spleen againſt any we diſlike at the Helm, or for the promoting a private miſtaken Intereſt of our own, to contribute to the ſinking of that Veſſel on which we our ſelves are embarqued, and muſt with it go down to the Bottom.

And as to the other, Union in Religious Affairs; I would, in the Spirit of Meekneſs, deſire ſuch as ſcruple, fixed and conſtant Communion with our Church, for a time calmly to lay aſide their Prejudices, and to ſuppoſe that it is poſſible for them to have miſtaken, or been miſled; and therefore to reſolve to examine Matters carefully themſelves, not to take Things upon truſt, or think it a ſufficient Reaſon for their Separation from us, that they have been educated another way.

Let them impartially conſider, Whether the eſtabliſhed Church be not the only Communion in which there is any likelihood, or indeed poſſibility, for us generally to unite againſt the common Enemy: Whether ſhe did not appear to be the only Bulwark againſt Popery in the late times of Danger and Tryal: Whether her Members did not bravely defend the Proteſtant Cauſe, when ſome that that had reflected upon them, as Popiſhly affected, did not venture to appear publickly in vindication of it: Whether they did not boldly oppoſe the Methods that were then uſed to introduce Popery, while the others did too eaſily comply with them.

Let them conſider, Whether there be any Dangers they can run by joyning with this Church, which can balance that apparent one, which the whole Proteſtant Intereſt is in, by their Diviſion from her.

Let them examin her as nicely as they pleaſe; let them bring her to the Teſt, ſhe refuſes not, ſhe has no Reaſon

to

to be afraid of it, ſhe can bear the Teſt of the Text: Let them try whether ſhe be of God, or not; Let them examine her by his Word, and ſee if ſhe wants any thing to make her a true Church; or abounds with any Thing that may make her a corrupt one: Let them try if ſhe has not Biſhops and Paſtors duly commiſſion'd for their reſpective Offices; if the whole Doctrine of Chriſtianity be not profeſs'd and taught in her, if the Sacraments of Chriſt's Inſtitution be not adminiſtred and received, and if ſhe have not a publick Worſhip for us to offer up our joint Homage and Prayers to God in.

Let them try whether ſhe ſuffers thoſe that Miniſter in Holy Things to be *Maſters of Mens Faith* and Conſciences, or to exercile any Superiority more than *the Holy Ghoſt, who has made them Overſeers*, has committed to them; whether ſhe allows them to deprive their Flocks of the ſincere Milk of the Word, and to feed them with lying Legends inſtead of it; whether ſhe does not require them *to preach the Goſpel, to be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, and to do the work of Evangeliſts, that they make full proof of their Miniſtry.*

Let them try whether ſhe corrupts her Faith by receiving humane Traditions into it, or Articles deſtructive of true Piety; whether ſhe teaches any Doctrines that may encourage Men to ſin, in hopes of pardon upon eaſie Terms, or to defer their Repentance in preſent, in proſpect of any after-Game, or any but ſuch as lay the moſt forcible Obligations upon all *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the preſent World.*

Let them try whether ſhe adds to, or diminiſhes from Chriſt's Inſtitutions; whether ſhe makes any thing to be a Sacrament which he has not made ſo, or mutilates and halves any that he has.

Let them try whether ſhe veils her Worſhip in a ſtrange Tongue, which the Ignorant cannot ſay *Amen* to; whether ſhe choaks it with Ceremony and Shew, or makes it conſiſt

in external frivolous Observances, and not in weighty substantial Acts of Devotion.

Let them try whether she divides her Service betwixt God and the Creature, and does not confine it to him alone to whom it is due.

In short, let them try whether there be any Term of Communion which she imposes upon her Members, either as to Belief or Practice, which can be proved to be sinful by the Scriptures; and if they can find nothing enjoin'd by her which can make it a sin to communicate with her, let them examine whether it be not a sin to divide from her?

These things let them examine with that impartiality and sincerity, that becomes Men that are truly conscientious and afraid of offending God; (they that are such will be as fearful of sinning on one hand as on the other) and then we may hope that we may go up *together to the House of God, and with one heart, and one mouth, glorifie him in the great Congregation.*

But after all, if any cannot satisfie all their Scruples, at least let them unite as far as they can, *whereunto they have attained, let them walk by the same Rule* with us, *and mind the same things*; and for those Particulars wherein they shall be differently minded, let them maintain a Spirit of Christian Charity towards us, not censuring us, not endeavouring to possess others with their Scruples, or to harden themselves in them, but disposing themselves to receive and submit to a Conviction when it shall be offered; and may God, in his due time, *reveal even those things unto them.*

I am sure this which I have been now pressing upon them, is no more than what the Protestant Interest, not only in this Kingdom but all over *Europe*, calls for from them.

As for us who have the happiness to be Members of this Church, let us walk inoffensively and charitably *towards those that are yet without*, pitying and praying for them, bearing with, condescending as far as we may to their Infirmities,

mities, and *endeavouring to restore them in the Spirit of Meekness.*

Let all bitterness, and clamour, and evil speaking, be far from us: Let us labour to work upon their Affections by all Instances of Love and Kindness, and upon their Understandings by good Reason and Argument.

Let all of us consider that we are Brethren, have one God for our Father, own one Lord Jesus Christ, profess the same Reform'd Religion as to substance, why then should circumstances hinder us but that we unite together for our common defence against our common Enemies?

But if we would effectually secure our selves against them, we must further engage God on our side: He has frequently delivered, and hitherto preserved us from them; but how should we expect he should go on to do so, unless we live like a People saved by the Lord, and in some measure answer the Ends for which he has spared us.

He has wonderfully secured to us a Reform'd Church and Religion, but surely he thereby calls upon us to adorn that Holy Religion with reform'd Lives; A Religion free from those Corruptions in Doctrine and Worship which that of *Rome* labours under, but certainly he with good reason expects that we also should be free from their Corruptions in Life and Manners; A Church pure in all her Administrations, but sure at the same time he requires us to be *pure and holy in all manner of Conversation.*

Labour we then after Peace and Holiness, after Union with one another, by Love and Charity, and with our God, by Repentance and Newness of Life.

Let there be no other Strife among us, but who shall be most zealous in promoting the Glory of God, and the Publick Good: *Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love, and unto good Works, not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, but endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.*

And

And *may the God of Patience and Conſolation grant us to be like minded, according to Chriſt Jeſus, may his Peace rule in our hearts*, conquering and ſubduing all Malice and Envy, all Prejudice and Partiality, all private Intereſt and corrupt Deſigns, and whatever may hinder us from godly Union and Concord; inclining us to *be kind and tender-hearted one towards another*, and diſpoſing us to lay aſide all Diſputes among our ſelves about leſſer Matters, and *to contend earneſtly for the Faith that was once delivered to the Saints.*

If thus our Jeruſalem were as a City that is at unity in it ſelf, if the Tribes went up together to worſhip to the Houſe of the Lord, if we heartily join'd in praying and labouring for the Peace thereof, ſhe would be *terrible to her Enemies as an Army with Banners.*

If there were among us a Spirit of Reformation, of Sincerity and Honeſty, of true Holineſs, and the *Fear of the Lord*, we might hope to invite him to *dwell among us, and to rejoice over us to do us good.*

We might then reaſonably expect that he will go on to defend us *from the deſtruction that waſteth at noon-day*, and *from the evil that walketh in darkneſs*, from all the open Attempts and ſecret Plots of our Enemies; that he will continue to us the Bleſſings of our great Deliverance, and preſerve that ſacred Life in which they are ſo much concern'd; that he will bleſs him, and us in him, with a long and proſperous Reign over us, till he ſhall have ſo *eſtabliſh'd the thing he hath wrought for us* by him, that the happineſs of our preſent excellent Conſtitution in Church and State, may be tranſmitted to our Childrens children, and all the Generations that are yet for to come.

FINIS.